

Amherst Budget Coordinating Group Summary Points – February 10, 2011

At our February 10th meeting, the members of the Budget Coordinating Group agreed that the following points would be conveyed to our home boards and committees:

- 1) That we ask the home boards and committees to consider during their budget deliberations the pros and cons of the following options, with regard to the potential for State aid to exceed initial projections:
 - a) Spending those dollars on key restorations and additions, allowing for maximum service provision with available resources
 - b) Leaving some amount of property taxes uncollected, allowing for: increased goodwill and decreased cynicism among voters; a slower phase-in of the tax increase and a longer interval before another override is needed; and the strengthening of the case for our collective fiscal responsibility next time an override is sought
 - c) Strengthening financial security by putting it toward long-underfunded capital investment, bringing reserves closer to target levels, or making an initial deposit in the OPEB trust fund (Other Post-Employment Benefits = retiree health care, an enormous unfunded liability; a funding plan is expected by the fall, with contributions expected to otherwise commence in FY13)

We ask home board and committees to consider additional factors that may affect the 2013 budget, such as the completion of the use of stimulus funds, the possible termination or reduction of CDBG funding, and the need to address the OPEB obligation.

- 2) That the updated Master Budget Calendar includes the following important dates

February and March: Budget presentations to Finance Committee

March 3: BCG Meeting: Information on more detailed budget requests (requests exceeding traditional percentage distributions) and response to consideration of summary point #1 above

March 5: Four Town Meeting

March 17: Feedback from home boards and committees re: information from the March 3rd BCG meeting (each home board should plan to meet between 3/3 and 3/17)

March 31: BCG meeting to review the budget after the House Way's and Means budget is released and prior to the Finance Committee meeting when it will need to develop a budget to recommend to the Town Meeting.

April 4: Select Board signs Town Meeting Warrant

April 7: Finance Committee develops consolidated budget for Town Meeting Consideration

May 2: Town Meeting begins

- 3) Repeating Summary Point #2 from the 11/29/10 BCG meeting, with new dates: That any requests for budgets exceeding traditional percentage distributions will be considered as part of the March 3rd budget presentations. BCG representatives will brief their home boards and committees on such information following that meeting and before March 17th, to get their feedback (support, opposition, neutrality or suggestions.) That feedback will be shared at the March 17th BCG meeting. The goal is to have any such request receive formal consideration by each home committee – as “more” for one budget area necessitates “less” for another – in order to formulate recommendations for Town Meeting. BCG requests that each home committee plan to meet between March 3rd and 17th for this purpose.